11 September 1971

Dear Harold,

Thanks for your letter of the 7th and the enclosures, and for your consideration during my "sabbatical" on Fire Island. Yes, it was rejuvenating--at least, that is what I heard persistently from everyone upon my return. But the effects are rapidly being dissipated and reversed by the backlog of pending work--household, family, WR and related matters, and at UN, where the two-month accumulation is really formidable, and the fall-winter work program is particularly heavy and complicated. Both my boss and his deputy (both medical doctors) have reached retirement age and sweeping changes are impending during the next months. We are already caught up in numerous meetings and face an awesome General Assembly, which in addition to the usual 100-odd items will deal also with the PR China issue, the global impact of the USA new economic gameplan and monetary relationships, the need to replace U Thant, and several other controversial issues--the E Pakistan situation, the threat of a general strike by the UN non-professional staff, etc.

That outline is by way of preface to responding to your question about my editorial suggestions on your revised PM manuscript. To clear up one point at the outset, I do not have the PM I, II or III mss. The only one I ever saw, on loan for a few days in the spring of 1969 as I recall the timing, was PM III. If I did have copies, or you supplied them now, I could work on them only as and when my other work permitted, which might hold you up considerably. I am being frank about this even though in a way it means cutting my own throat, for I would dearly love to see the ms. and the new evidence you have uncovered. I would also want to do anything that I was able to do to ensure the readability and impact of your PM. We have discussed this before and you know already how strongly I feel about the effective presentation of material--the organization and structure of the book, the syntax and the punctuation, the need for proper balance between the passionate and the dispassionate tone of the writing, and the physical appearance of the page.

Each of these factors are important and often the whole value and importance of the factual and evidentiary content of a book can be virtually lost, to the general public and even to more specialized readers, because of flawed presentation.

So my reply is, I would like very very much to review the up-dated PM and to give you conscientious and frank suggestions, but I cannot estimate how long it would take or how helpful you might really find my comments to be. Even more would I like to be able to convince you that by rushing ahead into various other things before your ms. has received from you yourself the maximum polishing, re-writing, and laborious attentions, you are largely nullifying the very purposes that motivate your work and your self-sacrifice over these many years. What you really need is a collaborator, someone, say, like Fred Cook, to be made familiar with your evidence and your arguments until his grasp of the material is secure, and then for him to prepare the first draft of the book, and then a final text on which the two of you would collaborate and agree. If such an arrangement is out of the question, then I would urge you to devote greater time and effort to perfecting your own writing, as well as to get trustworthy editing from others.

If you still feel that you would like me to review the PM ms., in the light of the limitations under which I would do it, I am certainly willing, and would do it with complete good faith. On other subjects--I am curious to see how Belin will react to my letter to him of the 7th, which was the final version of six earlier drafts which contained some choice insults, ultimately deleted with intense pain and reluctance. My new kitten, Mimi, is thriving, and I hope you will get to meet her on your next visit to NYC. All the best to you,

Sylvia

P.S. A supply of address-labels is enclosed for your use.